



ELECTION INTEGRITY – THE TRUTH ABOUT TEXAS

“Suppose an Article had been introduced into the Constitution, empowering the United States to regulate the elections of the particular States, would any man have hesitated to condemn it, both as an unwarrantable transposition of power, and as a premeditated engine for the destruction of the State Governments?”

– Alexander Hamilton, Federalist No. 59

Following the 2020 elections, Texas and other states passed reforms to restore public trust in the integrity of our election systems. Democrats nationwide have been advocating to federalize elections, in an attempt to seize power by subverting the duties of state legislatures established by Article I, Section 4, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution.¹

Texas Democrats attempted to stall commonsense reforms toward the end of the 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session by walking off the floor and denying votes on several key pieces of legislation, including the election integrity package.² In an unprecedented final stunt, during Texas’ first special session, they fled to Washington, D.C. on a private plane to deny a quorum required for a vote. Remaining in Washington, COVID-exposed Democrats called on Congress to intervene – and boost their political interests – by passing H.R. 1, which would impose a federal power grab over their state’s elections.³

Three Democrats testified at the July 29, 2021 House Committee on Oversight and Reform’s Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hearing on the Texas bill. Congresswoman Nancy Mace (R-SC1) questioned Texas Representative Senfronia Thompson about ID laws in Texas. She admitted they needed to show ID to board their private plane to Washington.⁴

After 38 days of blocking a quorum, enough legislators returned home to hold the vote.⁵ Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed SB 1, the Election Integrity Protection Act, into law on September 7, 2021.⁶

Texas’ law includes the following reforms:⁷

- **Standardizes election procedures across counties and provides more opportunities to vote early.**
 - Extends early voting hours and mandates that workplaces permit employees to make a trip to vote either during early voting or on Election Day.
 - Standardizes hours that counties can offer early voting, requiring polls to be open a minimum of nine hours no earlier than 6:00 a.m. and no later than 10:00 p.m.
 - Rolls back COVID practices, such as drive-thru voting, that are irrelevant post-pandemic, unless a voter is physically unable to enter a polling place.
 - Adds criminal penalties for election officials and others that violate election state laws.
- **Improves the integrity of mail-in ballots.**
 - Prohibits officials from mailing out unsolicited applications and ballots.

- Adds an ID requirement for mail-in voting. Voters have a choice to include their driver's license number, election identification certificate, or the last four digits of their Social Security number.
 - Approximately 72% of registered Democrats support Voter ID.⁸
 - Requires voters to sign their mail-in ballots to be verified with a previously filed signature.
 - Creates a process for voters that submit ballots with issues to be notified and given an opportunity to correct the problem.
- **Curbs ballot harvesting and illegal voting.**
 - Protects vulnerable voters by requiring individuals helping them to take an oath that defines how they can assist a voter, including a statement that they did not “pressure or coerce” the voter.
 - Individuals that help a voter complete their ballot will need to disclose their information, relationship to the voter, and if they were paid by a campaign or political committee.
 - Mail-in ballots must be received by an election official, rather than an unmanned drop box.
 - Requires the Texas Secretary of State's office to run its voter registration list against the Department of Public Safety database to remove non-citizens.
 - **Increases transparency of the election process and protects poll watchers.**
 - Ensures poll watchers have “free movement” around the voting facilities and can “sit or stand” close enough to see or hear all election activities, other than voters casting ballots.
 - If movement is restricted there is a legal avenue for poll watchers to seek a court order against the election official restricting access.
 - Classifies a Class A misdemeanor if an election official rejects an appointed poll watcher.
 - Counties with more than 100,000 people must record and livestream ballot counting.
 - Poll workers must complete training before they begin their duties and swear an oath they will not harass voters.
 - In order to track potential fraud, all cases of improperly cast ballots must be referred to the state attorney general.

The Texas legislature also passed HB 2283, which addresses private dollars funding election administration. The bill caps private donations at \$1,000. If an individual seeks to donate more, they need written consent from the Secretary of State, joint election commission, county election commission, and county election board.⁹

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¹ Jacob Schallus. The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription. National Archives. May 4, 2020.

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

² Alexa Ura. Texas Democrats abandon House floor, blocking passage of voting bill before final deadline. The Texas Tribune. May 30, 2021.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2021/05/30/texas-voting-restrictions-house/>

³ Lauren McGaughy, Gromer Jeffers Jr., and Allie Morris. ‘Fight of our lives.’ Texas Democrats leave the state to block debate on elections bill. The Dallas Morning News. July 12, 2021. [‘Fight of our lives.’ Texas Democrats leave the state to block debate on elections bill \(dallasnews.com\)](https://www.dallasnews.com) ; Paul J. Weber. ‘Leave the building’: Texas walkout escalates voting battles. CHRON. May 31, 2021.

<https://www.chron.com/politics/article/Texas-Voting-Bill-Battle-Walk-Out-16215347.php>

and Marc Siegel. What can we learn from the Texas Democrats who spread COVID in Washington? The Dallas Morning News. July 25, 2021. [What can we learn from the Texas Democrats who spread COVID in Washington? \(dallasnews.com\)](https://www.dallasnews.com)

⁴ Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Democracy in Danger: The Assault on Voting Rights in Texas. House Committee on Oversight and Reform. July 29, 2021. <https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings/democracy-in-danger-the-assault-on-voting-rights-in-texas>

⁵ Paul J. Weber and Acacia Coronado. Texas Democrats Return, End 38-Day Holdout Over Voting Bill. World Report U.S. News. August 19, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2021-08-19/texas-democrats-return-end-38-day-holdout-over-voting-bill>

⁶ Bret Jaspers. Gov. Greg Abbott Signs Controversial Voting Bill into Law. Kera News. September 7, 2021.

<https://www.keranews.org/politics/2021-09-07/gov-greg-abbott-signs-controversial-voting-bill-into-law>

⁷ Hughes. SB 1. Texas Legislature Online. <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=872&Bill=SB1>

⁸ Texans Overwhelmingly Support Voter ID, Protections for Mail-In Ballots: A majority of Texans oppose the federal “For the People” Act. Texas Public Policy Foundation. July 26, 2021. <https://www.texaspolicy.com/press/texans-overwhelmingly-support-voter-id-protections-for-mail-in-ballots-a-majority-of-texans-oppose-the-federal-for-the-people-act>

⁹ Phil King, Paul, Cain, Patterson, and Schofield. HB 2283. Texas Legislature Online. June 18, 2021.

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=87R&Bill=HB2283>